



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

---

PROFESSOR WILLIAM HENRY GREEN, D.D., LL.D.  
IN MEMORIAM.

---

By PROFESSOR JOHN D. DAVIS, PH.D., D.D.,  
Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

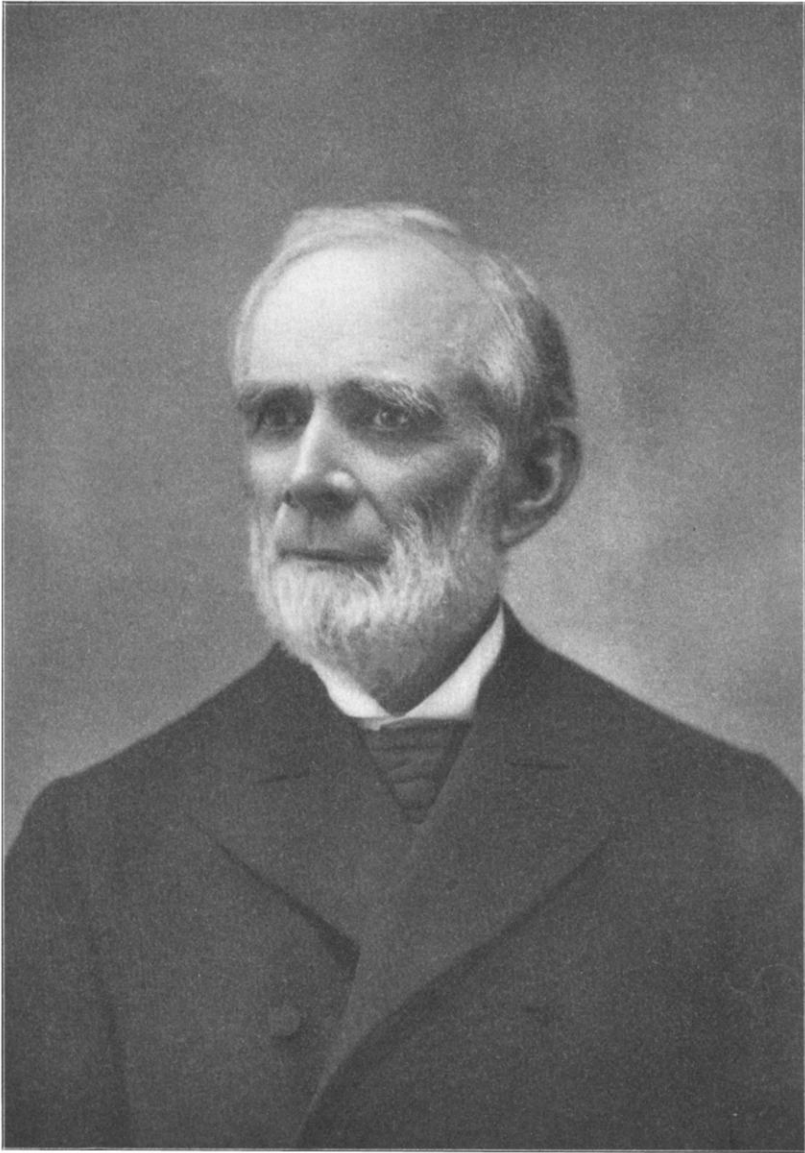
---

THE death of Professor William Henry Green, D.D., LL.D., took place at Princeton, N. J., on February 10. He was seventy-five years of age, having been born at Groveville, N. J., in 1825.

In 1851, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, Rev. William Henry Green, pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, was called to the chair of oriental and biblical literature in the theological seminary at Princeton. He accepted the call, and at the beginning of the session in August of that year he entered upon his new duties.

Professor Green soon became widely and favorably known as a grammarian of the Hebrew language. He had already taught the elements of Hebrew to the students of the seminary at Princeton for three sessions, from 1846 to 1849, and he rendered the same service during the first twenty-two years of his incumbency of the Hebrew chair, except for an interruption of one year. He gave other linguistic instruction also during this period, teaching at various times Sanskrit, Aramaic, and Arabic. In 1861 he published *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language*; in 1868, *An Elementary Hebrew Grammar*; and in 1872, *A Hebrew Chrestomathy*. His *Hebrew Grammar* reached its fifth edition in 1888. Gesenius' grammar went through six editions in Germany during the same years.

The grammatical system most in vogue in America when Dr. Green's work appeared was that of Gesenius, who was represented by the translations of his grammar made by Stuart and Conant. Stuart had substituted in 1846 in place of his own text-book a translation of the fourteenth edition of Gesenius'



THE LATE PROFESSOR WILLIAM HENRY GREEN, D.D., LL.D.  
Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

grammar as revised by Rödiger, and Conant's edition of 1855 was a translation of the seventeenth edition of Gesenius. But the field had not been uncontested. Nordheimer had published a grammar in New York in 1838, and a revision in 1842. Following Ewald, he dropped the terminology which had been borrowed from the Latin grammar, but which is false and misleading when applied to the phenomena of the Hebrew language. No other grammarian of the Hebrew language did this in America until Dr. Green, and the German revisers of Gesenius have scarcely yet cast off the last remnants.

Nordheimer and Green departed from both Gesenius and Ewald in the matter of the names given to the two tenses of the verb, and preferred to retain the older designation of preterite and future, and consequently to say Vav conversive instead of Vav consecutive. Their judgment in this minor preference has not been sustained, but their rejection of the Latin terminology has been sanctioned by the general consent of succeeding scholars. Their grammars accordingly mark a permanent stride forward. Nordheimer, following the scheme elaborated by Gesenius, classified the vowels according to their origin, and represented the system by the familiar triangle *A I U*. The same classification was adopted by Dr. Green, but was not presented so clearly, forcibly, and graphically. It is contained in a brief paragraph of four lines. Green rejected Gesenius' grouping of the vowels into five long and five short, to which Nordheimer and, of course, Gesenius' American translators adhered, in favor of Ewald's triple arrangement; and his rejection of Gesenius' classification has been fully sustained, even by the revisers of Gesenius. Green's diagram of the mutations of vowels is correctly based on the three pure vowels; hence it is accurate as far as it goes, and is simple; whereas Nordheimer's table is cumbrous, though accurate; a mere recital of facts without exhibition of the genetic relations. Both grammars were a distinct advance over all German grammars and their American reproductions; that is, they were the foremost grammars of their time in respect to terminology and practical form; but Green took the longer step in advance. How much longer will be more

apparent when other features of the two grammars are noticed. Green's superiority over Nordheimer is seen in his greater accuracy in statement of facts, in conciseness without loss of clearness, and especially in the absence of philosophical and philological explanations in which Nordheimer indulged but failed. Further, Green far surpassed Nordheimer in the completeness of his survey of word-forms. He exhibits the phenomena of the Hebrew language more exactly than had been done in any preceding work. His grammar was a notable achievement for the time. The great advance made since 1861 has been in the treatment of the noun and verb, and it has been rendered possible by the light cast upon Hebrew morphology by comparative Semitic grammar.

In 1888 Dr. Green revised the etymological part of his grammar slightly, and considerably enlarged the syntax. The new edition was an improvement over the older one; but the original work was the greater of the two. It recorded the highest attainment made up to that time in a Hebrew grammar intended for practical use. Professor McCurdy, of Toronto, has placed on record his estimate of Dr. Green's grammatical work:

Dr. Green became the Hebrew teacher of his generation in Princeton—not in Princeton merely, but in America; in fact, the most influential Hebrew teacher of his time among English-speaking men. As all the world knows, this influence was exerted mainly through his grammatical works. The two grammatical systems in vogue at the time when Dr. Green's larger grammar appeared came short of adequate fitness—the one by following too closely the grammars of the classical languages, the other by an over-refinement of exposition. It is enough to say that Dr. Green's grammatical system, by its lucidity of arrangement, its aptness and preciseness of definition, its sense of proportion in the treatment of linguistic phenomena, enables the pupil to apply at once his knowledge of forms and inflections to the explanation of his text. . . . But what he accomplished was not merely the simplifying and popularizing of Hebrew study. His treatment of the phenomena of the language was at the same time broad, scientific, philosophic.

Dr. Green ceased to teach Hebrew grammar in 1873. The time and energy gained for higher labor by the relinquishment of the elementary Hebrew instruction were devoted for twelve years to the revision of the Authorized Version of the Scriptures, and after the completion of this work by the American committee

in conjunction with the English committee, the American companies undertook a revision of their own work. Of the American Old Testament company, which was composed of fourteen eminent biblical scholars representing six denominations of Protestants, Dr. Green was the first and only chairman; and through their earnest discussions, in which individual opinion was advanced and defended with zeal and learning, amidst differences of view which at times threatened to defeat the objects of revision, he conducted the company with gentleness, patience, humility, and power, winning their respect and gratitude.

It was toward the close of this period, when the brunt of the revision work was done, that he found himself called upon to devote the powers of his mind henceforth almost exclusively to criticism. He had been engaged in critical studies as early as 1850, as his bibliography shows. With his assumption of the duties of his professorship in 1851, his patient investigations in that field became continuous and abundant, and it may be truthfully said that he devoted himself exclusively to criticism from the time that the theory of Reuss and Graf was given standing and strength by Kuenen and Wellhausen. The scholarly traits of his work and the masterly manner in which his discussions were conducted attracted attention, and from the first his writings were republished on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1884 the University of Edinburgh conferred on him the degree of doctor of divinity. For fifty years he had standing in the front rank of Old Testament scholars.

Dr. Green was convinced by evidence contributed by the several departments of biblical learning that the Bible's own account of itself is true; and he subjected everything which controverted that doctrine to searching examination. As the Bible's own account of itself is the church's doctrine of Holy Scripture, he became a champion of the original and unbroken faith of the church; and by reason of the scholarliness of his work and the uprightness and courtesy of his debate he proved himself an acceptable champion. Through his published writings, especially through four small volumes, *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, *The Unity of Genesis*, *Moses and the Prophets*, and *The Hebrew*

*Feasts*, he put heart into many men and enabled them to retain the Bible as true. It was especially pleasant to him to know that even in the land of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis his books brought joy to churchmen. A number of German pastors, university-trained clergymen, who are known as writers also, like Rupprecht, of Sausenhofen, Pfeiffer, of Noerenberg, and Doering, of Rheydt, looked to him almost as a leader, always as an authority. Hoedemaker, of Amsterdam, in a book already translated into German, not only draws upon Dr. Green's work, but passes a judgment upon him that reminds one of Professor Mead's appreciative estimate.

Fellowship was possible with another school also, represented by the late Dr. Dillmann and including, among others, Baudissin, Klostermann, Kittel, and Zöckler, who differ widely among themselves, but unite on common ground in holding the priority of priest to prophet. In placing priest before prophet they agree with the biblical record, and so far are a wall of defense against the Graf-Wellhausen theory. With the views and aims of this school Dr. Green had great sympathy, from their investigations he derived profit, and the scholarship of their greatest men he profoundly admired. In the late date which they assign to the legislation of Deuteronomy, however, he believed that they erred. He was convinced that they misinterpreted the evidence and surrendered their cause; and his argument is often directed against them. He was able to show that his theory is not only the biblical theory, whereas theirs is only partially so, but that his theory also accounts for the acknowledged facts of Israel's history as well as theirs does, and accords better with the results reached by other lines of investigation. Zöckler saw the value of Dr. Green's work, and the necessity of reckoning with it in critical research; and he lost no opportunity of drawing the attention of Germans to it in the pages of his magazine.

With this school of criticism in the ascendant, the resources of Dr. Green's great intellect would scarcely have been called forth in their fulness. The issue at stake was important, but not so vital as in the debate over the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis.

Between the biblical teaching and the latter theory there is, of course, no possible treaty of peace. One or the other must perish. It was in this controversy that Dr. Green's great work was done. His contribution has been this: he has been able to show that the Bible's own account of itself is superior to the counter-theory in that it possesses a consistent tradition reaching back into the earliest literature, puts less constraint, to say the least, upon the text and exegesis of the law, the prophets, and the psalms, and upon the acknowledged course of Israel's history, and fits into the well-ascertained results obtained in the several branches of the theological encyclopædia. His work along this line is masterful.

The outstanding characteristic of Dr. Green, which made him a thorough, earnest, and indefatigable investigator, was his love of truth. He had no end to serve, and no desire, save to discover and conserve the truth. Consequently he stated the problems of Old Testament criticism with entire candor, and set forth the arguments on both sides of the question with fairness and completeness. Further, he possessed thorough knowledge of the subjects of his department, both of the Old Testament and of critical views respecting it. His *Unity of Genesis* is a complete compendium of opinion respecting the partition of each chapter and verse in Genesis. His *Hebrew Feasts* drew from Siegfried the confession, made with lofty and indifferent air and some touch of satire, "nicht ungerüstet zog er aus, zu wagen den gewaltigen Strauss;" words of which the sense is imitated by the rendering: "Not unarmed did he go out, to undertake the fearful bout." Professor Mead several years ago, when estimating Dr. Green's contribution to biblical criticism, cautiously declared him to be "furnished as few others have been with a store of such knowledge as pertains to his department;" and that, although the foreign scholars whom he confronted in his *Moses and the Prophets* "ranked as Coryphæi among the extreme critics of the modern school," yet

it is safe to say that on every point their American opponent showed himself fully their equal in minute acquaintance with the questions at issue, and more than their equal in his ability to take a comprehensive view of the meaning and relations of the Old Testament books and institutions.



To every subject under his investigation he applied a calm, scholarly, exhaustive method. He subjected the entire body of opinion on the question at issue to dispassionate crucial examination. Siegfried confessed that he showed no fanaticism. He was venomously attacked in certain quarters, and sneered at, but he remained unmoved. He made no retort in kind. He never forgot his duty as a scholar and a Christian; he never swerved from the judicial attitude of the true critic. He was not a partisan; he was an honest, humble, godly seeker after truth. As Professor Edward L. Curtis, of Yale University, has said:

In solid learning, judicial fairness, and Christian courtesy [he] has been surpassed by none in these days of controversy over the nature of the Bible.

It is a great thing for a man not only to secure admiration from the scholars of his own trend of thought, but also to wrest from his opponents in debate the acknowledgment of his scholarship. This Dr. Green did. Not to enumerate individuals, this recognition has been publicly accorded by theological faculties so diverse in tendency as those of New College, Edinburgh; Alexandrian University, Finland; the universities of Leipzig, Breslau, Giessen, Greifswald, in Germany; and Zürich, in Switzerland. These tributes are honorable alike to those who have bestowed them and to him. They illuminate the words of Professor McCurdy:

While other names before his had been written large upon its walls, the men of this time have learned through him also to think deferentially and reverently of Princeton.

Evidently Dr. Green vindicated to the world the scholarliness of the conservative higher criticism. His work of research was coextensive with the problems of Old Testament criticism, covering the Graf-Wellhausen theory of development, the various hypotheses regarding the composition of the Pentateuch, and the questions of introduction generally; so that his vindication of the scholarliness of conservative criticism extended through its whole range.

The secret of Dr. Green's power is found in the transparent honesty of the man, the thoroughness of his scholarship, and his calm, judicial procedure. His unsurpassed knowledge of the

Scriptures ; of the critical positions, both conservative and radical, and the arguments by which they are buttressed ; of the history of criticism, its impulses, methods, and dependence on philosophy ; and of the relations of these questions to fundamental positions and well-established truths in other departments of thought, convinced him of the impregnability of the biblical claim and its ultimate triumph, gave depth and system and authority to his work, compelled respect from the great minds of all parties, and rendered the result of his labor acceptable to a wide circle of scholars outside of the narrower sphere of biblical criticism.

---